

**COMMISSION ON AGING AND DISABLED
REGULAR MEETING**

MARCH 2, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT

William DeMaio
Tillie DeMaio
Maureen Lynch
Eunice Scharr
Diana Robino
Patricia Hanbury

MEMBERS ABSENT

Susan Mazzocchi
Karen Brecher
Jerilyn Nagel

STAFF

Dianne Stone
Eleanor Eichner
Gail Whitney

ALSO PRESENT

Myra Cohen
Charles Francolino

I. CALL TO ORDER

William DeMaio called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Myra Cohen reported that the budget is due to the Town Council by Friday and they will begin deliberations on Monday, March 7th. The Senior and Disabled Center's budget will be heard on March 8th. There will be a public hearing on the proposed budget on April 7th.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Tillie DeMaio made a motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held on January 5, 2011, Patricia Hanbury seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held on January 5, 2011 was unanimously approved with a 6-0 vote.

V. STAFF REPORT

Dianne reported that the Center experienced many weather related issues during the month of January with cancelled programs and having to close the Center on a couple of days.

Dianne attended a meeting in Washington, D.C. in January of the National Institute of Senior Centers where the Assistant Secretary of Aging spoke. Dianne spoke on accreditation for senior centers and asked for direct funding for senior centers through the Federal government.

With regards to the State of Connecticut budget, funding for this department is strictly municipal. There will be some significant issues for older adults with co-pays being reduced from 15% to 6%. Dianne works closely with advocacy issues within the State of Connecticut Commission on Aging. She testified in opposition to a bill to Establish a Bill of Rights for Residents of Elderly Housing Projects and Members of Senior Centers.

The Silver Sneakers program began. This is a chair exercise class offered through health insurance companies that costs \$20 for an eight week session. An instructor from HealthTrax runs this program which has had approximately 12 people in attendance.

Other programs held included: Manicure Day on February 16th sponsored by Newington Health Care Center, a chef from the Lodge at Cold Spring was here on February 17th, Coffee Talk with State Representative Sandy Nafis on February 25th. Upcoming programs include: Book Club on March 8th, entertainment from the Ruth Chaffee Kindergarten on March 11th. CCI continues to hold sessions for the sandwich generation on preventing caregiver burnout – this is the third session and was very well attended. The Information and Referral Center continues to be very busy and in high demand handling energy assistance issues. Operation Fuel is no longer running, so energy assistance demand is overwhelming as the cold weather continues.

Staff was informed of disability issues from a representative of ADA which was sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel.

An Adult Day Care will be opening soon on Willard Avenue.

VI. REPORT OF HUMAN SERVICES

MOTION: Tillie DeMaio made a motion to accept the Report of Human Services for the month of December, Diana Robino seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was passed unanimously with a 6-0 vote.

VII. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY

Diana reported that the Special Olympians have been practicing floor hockey at Pratt & Whitney. Dianne stated that Leslie Morgan and Karen Gallicchio are still involved, however Nicole Nardi is coordinating this program now.

VIII. SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Pat reported that the Committee met this morning and was told that the leak in the roof was taken care of by the Facilities Department. The Committee was pleased to learn that the cleaning company continues to do a good job. The Committee was also brought up-to-date on the Center's budget.

IX. CLUB UPDATES

Charles Francolino reported that AARP 69 received a few more members to bring the total up to 170. At their next meeting they will be entertained by the Old Time Fiddlers.

In regard to the Tax Aide Program; sessions have begun, however the first day was cancelled due to the weather. To date 75 clients have been seen. The counselors have use of seven computers.

X. OLD BUSINESS

A. Housing

Dianne read a letter from New Samaritan that was sent to people on an interest list. The foundation is almost complete and they are hoping to be finished by the beginning of next year and will begin occupancy. There will be 32 one bedroom units approximately 538 square feet, two stories, two elevators, laundry facilities on each floor, 15 regular parking spaces and six handicapped parking spaces, residents must be 62 years of age and older with an individual income of \$30,000 or a couple income of \$34,000.

B. Strategic Plan

Dianne reported that the Strategic Plan is working on goals for programs for an age population that doesn't come to the Center with regard to information and referral, health, education, and lifelong learning. Maureen is speaking with some professors to hold educational programs and hopes these professors will do this pro bono.

C. Transportation

Dianne reported that Dial-A-Ride continues to provide out-of-town medical appointment rides. The Department of Transportation is holding hearings on providing permits to 140 wheelchair accessible CNG operated vehicles through Yellow Cab Company. Dianne and Bill both testified at these hearings. A representative is coming to the Center next week to speak with Dianne about this program. Many cab companies are against this idea because it takes away from their fares. The fares for these specific cabs would be the same as regular cabs and would run 24/7. ITN is moving from Middletown to West Hartford. West Hartford provided them with an office and three computers. Dianne will be speaking with them about including Newington in their transportation plans.

Dianne stated that in the Center's budget she has put in a request for a full time position of a Transportation and Nutrition Coordinator. The Meals on Wheels program is increasing and Eleanor is spending more and more time coordinating this program and

drivers. Additionally, Karen's Halpert's position of Elderly Service Worker is presently a part time position; Dianne put into the budget a request to make this a full time position.

D. Letter to Qwest

Dianne has not received any response from Qwest to date.

Bill mentioned the Governor's budget regarding merging State departments. For example, the Board of Education of the Blind would be split between the Board of Education and the Social Services Department.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business.

XII. AGENDA FOR APRIL MEETING

Dianne stated that a tentative date for the annual volunteer dinner is May 5th. The Wall of Honor nominees need to be discussed at the April meeting. Eunice, Diana, and Tillie will oversee the Wall of Honor nominations.

XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Eunice Scharr made a motion to adjourn, Maureen Lynch seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was unanimously passed with a 6-0 vote at 6:59 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Whitney, Commission Clerk